(ix) The Cochin Shops and Commercial Establishmcnts Bill

Mr. P. T. Jacob (*Latin Christians-Mattancheri*): I move that leave to introduce the Cochin Shops and Commercial Establishments Bill be granted.

Mr. M. K. Raja (*Mulakunnathukavu*): I second it.

Mr. Deputy President: The question is that the House may grant leave to introduce the Cochin Shops and Commercial Establishments Bill.

Motion put and carried

(x) The Cochin Panchayat Act (Amendment) Bill

Mr. P. K. Dewer (*Nominated*): I move that leave to introduce may be granted to the Cochin Panchayat Act (Amendment) Bill.

Mr. K. T. Achuthan (*Ezhuvas-Mukundapuram*): I second it.

Mr. Deputy President: The question is that leave to introduce the Cochin Panchayat Act (Amendment) Bill be granted.

Motion put and carried

VII. RESOLUTIONS:—NON-OFFICIAL—(*cont.*)

(1) Restriction on wives of Government Officers in standing as candidates for election

Mrs. T. Francis (*Ernaknlam-Women*): As I was on my legs discussing this very important resolution as far as the women of the conntry are concerned, of course it was time, 5 p.m. and the day was closed for the session. And so I am just continuing my speech. As I was continuing my speech I was interrupted by the Minister for Food and Education enlightening me by saying that there is no restriction, no rule in the constitution and electoral rules. So there can be no ban on those who are not really officials. I am glad to hear about it. In spite of such enlightenment and the very person who is well-versed in electoral rules and has studied it thoroughly, I must take it as a valuable peace of information gained towards our favour. Encouraged by such remarks by the Minister for Food and Education, I again ask why is this difference? What is the reason for it? Why are the wives are banned and the husbands of the lady officials are allowed to stand for election in these days of equality, why is this difference? I cannot for a moment understand implications involved in it. I remember once that when there were questions about this in the Council the leader of the official block, the Chief Secretary said that Government thought it is better that women are kept silent, kept in-active in the political field for the safety of their husbands. I cannot understand that. Somewhere there is an anti-deluvian standing order where I read something of this for the acts of the Government officials husbands are responsible. If really the wife does wrong punish her properly.

Mr. V. R. Krishnan Ezhuthassan (*Oorakam*): On a point of information is there any restriction prohibiting the wives from standing for elections?

Mr. P. Govinda Menon (*Minister for Food and Education*): There is none.

Mrs. K. Dakshayani Velayudhan (*Nominated*): If my memory is correct, I think there is a circular sent to all schools during the time of the last election that the wives are not expected to stand.

Mrs. T. Francis (*Ernakulam-Women*): It is a great injustice done to our women of our country. If there is a circular like that immediate orders must be issued cancelling that circular.

If the wives of the Government officials cannot, husbands of Government lady-officials must also be banned. If in their actions in the political field ladies commits offences punish them. If wives go wrong let her be punished. If husbands go wrong let him be equally punished. If wives of the Government officials are under restriction to stand as candidate for election the same restrictions should be extended to husbands also. Is it because Government suspect that men officials will use their official influence for canvassing votes for their wives. If they say so, what are the grounds for them to think that the lady-officials would not help their husbands when standing as candidates for election. Government have not made their position

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APPENDIX XV

THE COCHIN PANCHAYAT ACT (AMENDING) BILL

WHEREAS it is expedient to amend the Cochin Panchayat Act, XX of 1120 it is hereby enacted as follows.—

I. This Act may be called the Cochin Panchayat (Amendment) Act of 1122.

II. It shall come into force at once.

III. Substitute the following for Section 11 of the Panchayat Act, XX of 1120.—

"11. No person shall be qualified for election to any seat on a Panchayat unless

(*a*) his name appears on the Electoral Roll

(*b*) and he has completed his twentyfifth year of age".

Statement of Objects and Reasons

It is not necessary to fix any literacy or property qualification for a voter to stand as a candidate for election. This is not insisted on in the case of a candidate seeking election to the Legislative Council. Literacy or property qualification is no test of political education. However, it is not likely that the electorate would elect an illiterate as their representative. Moreover, this literacy qualification would create complications in fixing as to what should be the test of literacy. Hence this Bill.

(Sd.)

P. K. DEWER

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